

Message Text

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ACTION AID-31

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 IGA-02 SP-02 USIA-06

NSC-05 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

LAB-04 SIL-01 /106 W

----- 073512

R 060928Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4154

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, TC

SUBJ: REIMBURSABLE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: BRIEFING FOR SHAIKH SULTAN
OF SHARJAH

1. TOWARDS END OF THEIR STAY IN UAE, BERGER TEAM HAD MEETING WITH SHAIKH SULTAN, RULER OF SHARJAH. ALTHOUGH MOST OF SESSION WAS DEVOTED TO RULER'S DESCRIPTION OF SHARJAH'S DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS, HE DID AT END EXPRESS CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN OBTAINING FURTHER INFORMATION--PARTICULARLY ANYTHING IN WRITING INCLUDING CASE STUDIES OF EARLIER EFFORTS--REGARDING AID CAPABILITIES IN FIELD OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. SHAIKH SULTAN STATED THAT HE WOULD BE IN UNITED STATES FOR BRIEF VISIT FIRST WEEK IN MAY. UNFORTUNATELY HE PLANS TO BE IN WASHINGTON FOR ONLY ONE DAY DURING THAT PERIOD, BUT HE STATED HE WOULD WELCOME CHANCE TO RECEIVE INFORMATION (IN WRITING, OR CONCEIVABLY A BRIEFING) AT THAT TIME.

2. COMMENT: SHAIKH SULTAN CLEARLY NOT KNOWLEDGEABLE RE AID ACTIVITIES AND, GIVEN LIMITED OPPORTUNITY FOR BERGER TEAM TO BRIEF HIM, HE IS STILL VERY MUCH IN INFORMATION GATHERING STAGE. MOREOVER, HIS DEVELOPMENT ADVISER, BERT PAFF (AMERICAN), HAS EXPRESSED SOME SKEPTICISM TO US AS TO HOW AID TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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MIGHT FIT INTO SHARJAH GOVERNMENT'S DEVELOPMENT PLANS. HE

POINTS OUT THAT FOCUS IN SHARJAH IS ON TRYING TO CHANNEL PRIVATE SECTOR INTO DEVELOPMENT AREAS FAVORED BY GOVERNMENT--RATHER THAN ON DIRECT GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENTS IN PROJECTS. FINALLY, WHILE SHARJAH HAS SOME OIL, IT IS BY NO MEANS IN CLASS WITH ABU DHABI OR EVEN DUBAI, AND THERE IS SOME DOUBT THAT SHAIKH SULTAN HAS FOCUSED ON FACT THAT ASSISTANCE BEING TALKED ABOUT IS REIMBURSABLE.

3. SHAIKH SULTAN IS, HOWEVER, BEST EDUCATED, MOST DEVELOPMENT-MINDED OF ALL OF UAE'S RULERS. HIS APPROACH TO PLANNING IS FAR MORE SYSTEMATIC THAN THAT OF HIS PEERS. MOREOVER THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION THAT, IN THE EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE OF UAE, SHAIKH SULTAN MIGHT BE GIVEN KEY ROLE--E.G. PRIME MINISTER--IN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. HE IS IN SHORT SOMEONE WHO SHOULD KNOW ABOUT AID AND ITS CURRENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CAPABILITIES. HE IS LIKELY TO GRASP QUICKER THAN MOST HOW SUCH SERVICES COULD WELL SERVE SHARJAH AND UAE. EVEN IF REIMBURSABLE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS NOT IMMEDIATELY APPLICABLE TO SHARJAH, PROVIDING SHAIKH SULTAN WITH BETTER GRASP OF POSSIBILITIES COULD WELL PAY FUTURE DIVIDENDS.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT NEA/ARP AND AID (WE BELIEVE THIS MIGHT BE SOMETHING BILL KENDRICK SHOULD TAKE HAND IN) CONTACT UAE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO GET FURTHER DETAILS OF SHAIKH SULTAN'S ITINERARY (RULER SUGGESTED THIS AS POINT OF CONTACT) AND OFFER TO BE AS RESPONSIVE AS POSSIBLE TO RULER'S DESIRE FOR FURTHER INFO ON AID. IF HIS SCHEDULE PERMITS, BELIEVE COMBINATION OF ORAL BRIEFING AND WHATEVER PRINTED HANDOUTS MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE WOULD BEST SERVE PURPOSES. IF THS NOT FEASISPE THEN EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE PROVIDE SHAIKH SULTAN WITH SOLID WRITTEN PACKAGE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, DEBT REPAYMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ABUDH00882
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760129-0078
From: ABU DHABI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760495/aaaaddau.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AID
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <22 OCT 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REIMBURSABLE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: BRIEFING FOR SHAIKH SULTAN OF SHARJAH
TAGS: EAID, TC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006